GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:9
ANSWERED ON:24.07.2000
NATIONAL BLOOD POLICY
RAJO SINGH

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have recently announced the draft National Blood Policy;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof;

(c) whether the experts in this field have criticised this policy;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the Government have considered the views expressed by the experts about the said policy;

(f) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(g) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure hurdle free supply of blood to the needy persons?

Answer

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR)

(a) to (g): A statement is laid on the table of Lok Sabha.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.9 FOR 24.7.2000

Supreme Court of India on 4th January, 1996, directed the Union of India and the StateGovernments to take a number of steps towards revamping the entire blood transfusion services. Apart from carrying out immediate measures to comply with the directives of the Supreme Court,a draft National Blood Policy has also been formulated for the purpose of providing necessarydirections and guidelines for better management of blood transfusion services in the country. This policy is expected to function as the framework on which various programmes to revamp the system are expected to be based on.

This draft National Blood Policy, which is presently under consideration of the Government,was drawn up after a process of extensive and exhaustive consultations among various professionals in the field of blood safety, blood bankers from both public, private and voluntary sectors, academics and consumers of blood. Constructive suggestions and recommendations had been received from various quarters including experts in the field. With the constitution of National Blood Transfusion Council in May, 1996, the formulation of National Blood Policy was taken up by this Council and the final draft was prepared afterconsidering all the representations received in November, 1999.

The salient features and objectives of the National Blood Policy are as follows:

- To reiterate firmly the Government commitment to provide safe and adequate quantity of blood, blood components and blood products.
- To make available adequate resources to develop and re-organise the blood transfusion services in the entire country.
- To make latest technology available for operating the blood transfusion services and ensure its functioning in an updated manner.
- To launch extensive awareness programmes for donor information, education, motivation, recruitment and retention in order to ensure adequate availability of safe blood.
- To encourage appropriate clinical use of blood and blood products.
- To strengthen the manpower through human resource development.
- To encourage Research & Development in the field of Transfusion Medicine and related technology.
- To take adequate regulatory and legislative steps for monitoring and evaluation of blood transfusion services and to take steps to eliminate profiteering in blood banks.

For generating enough blood through Voluntary Blood Donation Programme, the Government of India have taken a number of steps such as media campaign through TV, AIR and newspaper; developing IEC material for one-to-one communication; observation of National Voluntary Blood Donation Day on 1st October every year; encouraging rational use of blood among clinicians and the launching of special campaigns to educate masses to support voluntary blood donations.

A comprehensive revision of drugs and cosmetics rules was undertaken to include provisions relating to blood and blood products. Mandatory testing of blood for transfusion transmissible infections, banning of professional blood donation and compulsory licensing of blood banks were some of the significant policy decisions taken to ensure blood safety.

The Government of India has also modernised 815 blood banks in the Government and voluntary sector during Phase I of the National AIDS Control Programme between 1992 to 1999. This modernisation was in terms of providing equipment, training and salaries for blood bank personnel. 40 component separation units were also set up in Phase I. During Phase II of the Programme, it is proposed to set up 40 component separation units to promote rational use of blood, 20 major blood banks and 80 new district level blood banks in the country. It is also proposed, as a major initiative, to set up 10 state of the art model blood banks in underserved regions of the country. These model blood banks would function as demonstration projects for the rest of the region and would be a significant step in the eventual centralisation of blood transfusion services in the country.